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Lambda Letters Project

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A Heart-to-Heart Talk

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

I am deeply concerned about the state of race and ethnic relations in California and our nation, particularly as it concerns immigrants. I hear more and more about anger and antagonism among the American public towards immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants. I hear people calling undocumented immigrants criminals and lowlifes who should be thrown out and sent back to their countries of origin.

I will be brazen enough to say I think many of these immigrants should be considered heroes who sacrifice a great deal in order to make life better for their children and other family members.

I have been reading a nonfiction book, *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazario, the Pulitzer Prize winner and reporter for the Los Angeles Times. The book begins by describing what life is like for many thousands of people in Honduras. Many of them earn less than a dollar a day. Their monthly income ranges from \$40 to \$100 a month. However, rent for a bare one-room shack with no electricity, running water, or bathroom averages \$30 per month. Children need to be put to work at ages 5, 6, and 7 just so that the family can afford the absolute necessities of life.

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Got Birth Certificate?

The Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 was passed by Congress and signed by the President. One feature of the bill requires that any US citizen who applies for Medi-Cal after July 1, 2006, must provide a copy of his or her birth certificate to qualify for aid. Any citizen now on Medi-Cal must provide a birth certificate by July 1, too. Failure to do so could result in loss of coverage.

Medi-Cal provides vital health insurance and long-term care coverage to 6.5 million low-income children, their parents, and elderly or disabled Californians. Are you currently enrolled in Medi-Cal? Get a copy of your birth certificate by July 1. Are you on a limited income? Are your parents or other family members on a limited income? You or they may need to enroll in Medi-Cal in the future. It would be wise to have a copy of a birth certificate on hand just in case.

Contact the County Recorder's office in the county of your birth. If you want to apply for Medi-Cal, contact the county government in the county in which you reside. The county office that handles Medi-Cal is probably called the Department of Human Services or the Department of Social Services. They might also be able to send you a pamphlet with background information about the program.



It's Our Anniversary

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

The Lambda Letters Project was founded 18 years ago this month. From a very small effort then, we have grown into a statewide organization that delivered over 253,000 letters and e-mails to elected officials last year.

The Project was an outgrowth of the March on Washington in 1987. My partner Larry and I attended the event, along with half a million LGBTI people and their allies. We thought that surely this would impress Congress. But just a few days later, the Senate approved a bill that required that all sexually suggestive content be removed from any federally funded safe-sex materials. That of course made them much less effective.

So my partner and I concluded that direct input to legislators from the people in their districts was needed to get legislators to do the right thing on the difficult issues facing our community. We came back to Sacramento and began seeking support for the concept. The River City Democratic Club agreed to establish a committee to carry out the concept. However, by April 1988, it was decided to make the Lambda Letters Project an independent entity. We thought that might increase the chance that we could influence elected officials of any party.

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

February, 2006

14,266 letters

In all of 2006

16,459 letters & e-mails

Dollars Spent

January, 2006

\$4,585

In all of 2005

\$52,770

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Our Mission

To promote the social, economic, and human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals, couples, and families; people affected by HIV/AIDS; people of color; women; and people of low economic status. We urge elected officials to enact and support legislation that accomplishes this goal.

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Discrimination Complaints

Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation or because of your age (40 and over), ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, medical condition, national origin, race, religion, or sex? Have you been denied family and medical care leave or pregnancy disability leave? If so, you may register a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing.

In cases of employment discrimination, call the department at (800) 884-1684.

In cases of housing discrimination, call (800) 233-3212. The person answering the phone will schedule an appointment for you at the Department of Fair Employment and Housing Office which is closest to your home or place of employment.

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Help Maintain Naturalization Support

By Marty Martinez, Legislative Analyst

This month we ask that you write to the Assembly Appropriations Committee in support of AB 2060.

As home to the largest immigrant population in the country, California must invest now in the successful integration of its immigrants. According to census figures, one in four California residents are foreign-born, a rate higher than any other state in the United States.

California's immigrants are eager to participate fully in the economic, cultural, and political life of their newly adopted home. However, many of them lack the appropriate tools or information to do so.

Many immigrants currently receive help achieving citizenship through the existing Naturalization Services Program (NSP). This program offers very important programs and services toward citizenship. It emphasizes civic participation, skills building, and coordinating services through collaborative, community-based models that have the capacity to reach California's diverse immigrant communities. These programs are successful and must be perpetuated by supporting legislation currently in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 2060, the New Californians Act, by Assemblymember Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate) would strengthen the ability of immigrants to contribute to their communities as new citizens upon naturalization. The bill would make the existing Naturalization Services Program a permanent program, enhancing existing services by promoting regional coordination and creating an advisory council of naturalization experts throughout the state. The bill would also ensure that all immigrants who are eligible for naturalization not only have access to naturalization services but also engage in a process towards citizenship that emphasizes increased civic engagement and skills building.

We must ensure that California continues to reap the economic and cultural

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Educate Our Children About Sexuality

By Shirin Buckman, Legislative Analyst

Please write this month to the Assembly Education Committee opposing AB 2311, authored by ultraconservative Assemblymember Dennis Mountjoy (R-Monrovia). This nonsensical bill would "prohibit the promotion of homosexuality in public education."

A curriculum that teaches LGBTI issues is beneficial to all students for many reasons.

First, questioning youth will have a better understanding of which color of the rainbow they are and why it is not "abnormal" to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex. Discussing sexuality among peers can help a questioning student understand that they are not alone in their feelings about their sexuality.

More importantly, it teaches questioning youth to feel comfortable with what they are feeling.

Second, LGBTI education provides LGBTI students with important, perhaps lifesaving information. According to Human Rights Watch, "Accurate health information is critical for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth because those who are victimized are more likely to engage in risky behaviors, including alcohol and drug abuse and unprotected sex."

In addition, LGBTI students who may not be "out" would benefit greatly from school-taught LGBTI sex education because they may not have access to information on safe sex anywhere else. In some localities, libraries do not even have books on homosexuality. It is important to teach *all* students how to be safe and not sorry.

Third, when straight students are educated about LGBTI issues, they are less likely to torment their LGBTI counterparts at school. The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) reports in its 2005 article, "From Teasing to Tortment: School Climate in America," that "Sixty-five percent of high school students experience bullying and harassment, with real or perceived sexual orientation being one of the top two reasons students are singled out for abuse."

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Urge Support for Roe v. Wade

By Joy Fisher, Legislative Analyst

Most women of childbearing age in the United States today have never known a time when safe and legal abortions were not available to them as an option. But 33 years after the passage of *Roe v. Wade*, a woman's right to abortion is again at grave risk in the United States.

In a direct challenge to the *Roe* decision, state of South Dakota passed a law in March that makes it a felony to perform an abortion for any reason other than to save the life of the mother. Lawmakers there are hoping that, with two new appointees to the US Supreme Court, that landmark decision will be overturned and new restrictive policies will become the law of the land.

While the women of South Dakota wait to see whether the one remaining abortion clinic in the entire state will be forced to close its doors, a recent Field poll in California reported that about two-thirds of California adults support the state's current abortion laws or think the law should allow for even more increased access to abortion services (*Sacramento Bee*, March 14).

The California State Legislature is doing its part to preserve this vital right as well. Senate Joint Resolution 19, introduced by Senator Elaine Alquist (D-San Jose), would memorialize the Congress and the President of the United States to protect and uphold the intent and substance of *Roe v. Wade* relating to reproductive rights.

Originally introduced to celebrate and commemorate the 33rd anniversary of this historic decision on January 22, the bill is pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The author's office intends to continue to press for its passage. Passage now is more important than ever!

The text of the bill reads as follows:

"WHEREAS, January 22, 2006, is the 33rd anniversary of the historic United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) 410 U.S. 113, guaranteeing women's reproductive rights, an occasion deserving of celebration and special public commendations; and

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Economic Issue

Support Death Penalty Moratorium

By Shirin Buckman, Legislative Analyst

This month we ask that you write to the Assembly Appropriations Committee in support of AB 2266.

The California Constitution mandates that Assembly bills introduced in 2005 must pass in the Assembly before the end of January. AB 1121, the death penalty moratorium bill by Assemblymember Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood), expired in the Assembly on January 31. However, this year Assemblymember Sally Lieber (D-Mountain View) introduced AB 2266, a new version of the same bill. It is currently in the Assembly Committee on Public Safety where it will be voted on March 28. We expect it to pass that committee.

Like AB 1121, AB 2266 would establish the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice to examine the use of the death penalty and recommend safeguards preventing the execution of innocent or wrongly convicted inmates.

We believe the application of the death penalty violates the 8th Amendment safeguards against "cruel and unusual punishment." As held by Supreme Court Justice Brennan in *Furman v. Georgia*, capital punishment is degrading to human dignity, which is excessive and unnecessary government-sanctioned punishment.

California uses lethal injection to put inmates to death. In March 2006, the ACLU filed a suit in the US District Court of the Northern District of California to debate the humanity of lethal injection. Currently the state of California injects an inmate with three drugs: one to make the inmate unconscious, the next to paralyze, and the last to stop the heart. It is the use of the paralyzing drug that is being disputed because, according to the ACLU's attorney, "If the inmate is not unconscious...it could be that for about 10 or 15 minutes he is laying on the table in excruciating pain but unable to express that. In effect, the state is throwing a chemical curtain—a mask—over what is happening in the death chamber."

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HIV/AIDS Issue

Support Needle Exchanges

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

This month we ask that you write to the Assembly Appropriations Committee in support of AB 2076, which would allow state general funds for HIV prevention to support locally authorized needle-exchange programs. It would also allow these programs to use state funds to purchase sterile needles and syringes, which the state does not currently permit.

The bill also specifies that local health officers must include information about the use of public funds for needle-exchange programs in their annual reports to the local governing jurisdiction that authorized the needle-exchange program.

Current California Department of Health Services (DHS) policy allows state HIV prevention and education funds to be used for costs associated with authorized needle-exchange programs, except for the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes. The available sources of funding for the purchase of sterile needles and syringes have been decreasing.

According to the state Office of AIDS, injection drug use continues to be one of the most prevalent risk factors for new HIV and AIDS cases in California. An annual report issued by the Office of AIDS within the DHS reveals that sharing contaminated syringes and other injection equipment is linked to 20 percent of all reported AIDS cases in the state through 2003. State data suggests that over 1,500 new syringe-sharing HIV infections occur annually. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that it costs between \$154,000 and \$196,000 to provide lifetime care to a person infected with HIV.

The Legislature has responded to the spread of HIV among injection drug users by adopting AB 136 (Chapter 762, Statutes of 1999), permitting localities to determine whether or not to operate clean needle and syringe exchange programs. Many localities are now operating such programs, which have been shown to reduce the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections significantly among injection drug users, their sexual partners, and children.

Moreover, these programs have been effective in moving individuals into drug

People of Color Issue

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benefits of its immigrant communities, who are among the state's most productive entrepreneurs, by facilitating their successful integration into the fabric of our state. An investment in California's immigrants today will benefit the state in the future. California's immigrants are eager to participate fully in the social, economic, and political life of their newly adopted home. We must make sure that they have the tools to do so because we will all benefit.

Please urge the members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee to vote for AB 2060.



treatment programs and in reducing the number of used needles disposed in public places, which pose a threat to public health and safety.

The US government prohibits the use of federal funds to support the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes by clean needle and syringe exchange programs. To date the state has not permitted the use of its funds for the purchase of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes. The ability of clean needle and syringe exchange programs to purchase an adequate supply of sterile hypodermic needles and syringes is essential to California's ability to reduce the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases further and to relieve the public cost for the care and treatment of HIV disease and other diseases.

AB 2076 would substantially aid local efforts to reduce the rate of HIV transmission through injection drug use in California by authorizing the use of state funds for the purchase of clean hypodermic needles and syringes. Any funds that would be expended for clean needles and syringes would come from existing appropriations for state HIV prevention funds. Accordingly, this bill does not increase funding and will, in effect, make counties prioritize how they expend prevention funds. One of these choices may be to purchase needles and syringes, which could result in significant savings for state-funded health programs.

Please write to the Assembly Appropriations Committee in support of this important legislation.



April Legislative Update

Each bill introduced in the state legislature must be reviewed by a policy committee in each house before the full Assembly and Senate can vote on them. The Assembly Health Committee is an example of a policy committee. The job of the policy committee is to decide if the bill makes sense from a policy standpoint.

Each bill expected to cost the state or local governments \$150,000 or more per year must also be voted on by the Appropriations Committee of each house before the full House can vote on it. A bill that costs that much is called a "fiscal" bill.

There are deadlines for getting bills through the policy committees. All fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee, of the house in which the bill was introduced, no later than April 28. Non-fiscal bills must be approved by the policy committee, of the house in which they were introduced, no later than May 12.

The purpose of these deadlines is to ensure that bills move forward in time to be passed before the legislature closes for the year. Any bill missing these deadlines dies. No further action is permitted on the bill unless its author gets a waiver of the rules.

Here is a list of the bills we are tracking at this time.

HIV/AIDS Issues

AB 1677 (Paul Koretz, D-West Hollywood)
Purpose: To allow nonprofit agencies to distribute condoms in state prisons.
Status: In the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2044 (Dave Cogdill, R-Modesto)
Purpose: To allow courts to order HIV testing of a student when it is considered likely that a significant amount of blood, saliva, semen or other bodily fluid was transferred between a student and a school employee.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Watch.

AB 2076 (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To allow local governments to use HIV prevention and education general funds received from the state to pay for supplies for needle-exchange programs.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2203 (Bonnie Garcia, R-El Centro)
Purpose: To require that a woman be provided an information sheet on HIV and AIDS any time she seeks an gynecological exam or family planning appointment.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2280 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)
Purpose: To require the state to develop a counseling model for all people who receive HIV testing at any publicly funded clinic.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on March 28. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2383 (Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton)
Purpose: To require HIV testing of any inmates entering a prison or hospital by court order for a period of a year or more. Would require testing 30 to 60 days prior to release.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1341 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To repeal the deadline currently in place on a law which allows thrift stores selling goods to support programs for people with HIV/AIDS to not charge a sales tax on the goods sold.
Status: In the Senate Revenue and Tax Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SJR 22 (Jackie Speier, D-San Mateo)
Purpose: To ask Congress to approve federal legislation meant to speed the development of a microbicide to prevent the transmission of HIV and other diseases.
Status: In the Senate Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

Economic Issues

AB 75 (Dario Frommer, D-Glendale)
Purpose: To establish the California Rx Plus State Pharmacy Assistance Program. Any licensed pharmacy or drug manufacturer could enter the program. The state would negotiate drug discounts with them on behalf of people on a limited income.
Status: In the Senate Health Committee. Hearing cancelled by author. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1778 (Sally Lieber, D-San Jose)
Purpose: To allow parents to prohibit schools from releasing information about the parent's children to US military recruiters.
Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1780 (Joe Baca, D-San Bernardino)
Purpose: To reduce Community College fees to \$11 per unit per semester.
Status: In the Assembly Higher Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1786 (Rudy Bermudez, D-Norwalk)
Purpose: To require the Superintendent of

Education to look for ways of providing extra funds to schools for student busing programs divided among school districts on an equitable basis.
Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1835 (Sally Lieber, D-San Jose)
Purpose: To increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, effective July 1, 2007, and to \$7.75 per hour, effective July 1, 2008. Minimum wage would be adjusted automatically every January 1 after that, based on inflation.
Status: In the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1836 (Lynn Daucher, R-Brea)
Purpose: To cause bonds to be issued, if approved by the voters of California, to be used for school building improvement or construction.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1844 (Ed Chavez, D-City of Industry)
Purpose: To increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, effective July 1, 2007, and to \$7.75 per hour, effective July 1, 2008. Minimum wage would be adjusted automatically every January 1 after that, based on inflation.
Status: In the Assembly Labor and Employment Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1851 (Joe Coto, D-San Jose)
Purpose: To delete a deadline in current law that allows participating health, dental, or vision plans to assist people in signing up for the Healthy Families Program. The plans would be allowed to continue doing this.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1971 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)
Purpose: Currently health insurance companies and health care plans are required to provide limited coverage, and less expensive, health coverage plans. This is a pilot program to end September 1, 2007. This bill extends the program to 2010.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1981 (Karen, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To establish a program of grants to be made available to community-based organizations together with local law enforcement. The grants would fund programs to provide re-entry services to inmates of local jails and hopefully reduce their rate of rearrest.
Status: In the Assembly Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 5

AB 1983 (Karen, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To allow foster children on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to continue getting AFDC until age 25 at the latest and as long as he or she remains in foster care and continues in full-time education for a high school diploma, a high school equivalency certificate, or the equivalent level of vocational or educational training.

Status: In Assembly Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position:

AB 2004 (Betty Karnette, D-Long Beach)

Purpose: To suspend Medi-Cal benefits for a juvenile who is sentenced to jail but require the Department of Correction to assure that those benefits are re-established as soon as the youth is released from jail.

Status: In the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on March 28. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2040 (Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park)

Purpose: To require the state to provide summer and Saturday dates for taking the high school exit exam.

Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2046 (Joe Coto, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To require some public schools providing kindergarten to offer full-day sessions. By 2010 all schools offering kindergarten would have to offer full-day sessions.

Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2052 (Ray Haynes, R-Temecula)

Purpose: To declare the intent of the legislature to encourage free-market development in low-income neighborhoods and to create jobs, build affordable housing, and revitalize low-income neighborhoods.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Watch.

AB 2192 (Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To allow certain drug offenders to qualify for CalWORKs benefits under certain conditions.

Status: In the Assembly Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 2262 (Joe Baca, D-San Bernardino)

Purpose: To allow the state to repay the student loans, up to a total of \$11,000 per student, if they got a teaching credential in a subject that has a shortage of teachers, or if they teach in a school that has a large number of teachers with emergency credentials, or which has many low-income students, or is an underperforming school.

Status: In the Assembly Higher Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 2266 (Sally Lieber, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To put a temporary moratorium on the death penalty while it is studied.

Status: In the Assembly Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2334 (Ed Chavez, D-City of Industry)

Purpose: To require janitorial services to register annually with the state and to meet regulations set by the state including certain insurance and licensing requirements.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2339 (Mark Ridley-Thomas, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To establish the Prostate Cancer Treatment Program to provide outreach, education, prevention, and treatment of colorectal cancer in low-income men.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2450 (Keith Richman, R-Granada Hills)

Purpose: To establish a single point of entry, but not an exclusive method of enrollment, for enrollment in all health care programs operated by state or local government.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2466 (Lynn Daucher, R-Brea)

Purpose: To allow assets in a 401(k), IRA, or 529 college savings program to be excluded when determining whether a person is poor enough to qualify for CalWORKs.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2469 (Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa)

Purpose: To require the state to pay counties with 250,000 or fewer residents an amount annually equal to that previously paid by the county for in-home supportive and personal care services provided to people who are qualified aged, disabled, or blind persons on low incomes.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2481 (Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa)

Purpose: To increase by 5% the rates paid to adults who provide foster care to children who have been removed from their families homes. It would also provide for an annual increase, for the next four years, in the payment for those and related services.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2487 (Dave Cogdill, R-Modesto)

Purpose: To request the University of California and the California State University to reimburse part of the Community College fees of students who went through community colleges and later graduated from either the University of California or California State University.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2489 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To allow any county office of education, or consortium of school districts, together with a county office of education, to apply for state grants

to pay for operating educational services to foster children.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2495 (Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: This state, under the CalWORKS program, through the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) program, provides aid on behalf of eligible children who are placed in the home of a relative caretaker. This bill augments payments under the Kin-GAP program by amounts equal to the amount of specialized care increment or clothing allowance the child would be eligible for under the AFDC program.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2536 (Cindy Montanez, D-Mission Hills)

Purpose: To apply state laws on eight-hour workdays and 40-hour work weeks, and on overtime pay for additional hours worked, to work done by personal attendants and live-in (non-live-in) household employees.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AJR 40 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To ask Congress to pass the Medicare Informed Choice Act, HR 3861.

Status: In the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on March 21. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 778 (Dean Florz, D-Bakersfield)

Purpose: To prohibit banks from charging a fee for cashing a paycheck when the bank issued the check on behalf of an employer.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 840 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To provide health insurance for every resident of California.

Status: Passed the Senate. In the Assembly Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1118 (Liz Figueroa, D-Fremont)

Purpose: To provide affordable health care for all children in California.

Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 1124 (Tom Torlakson, D-Concord)

Purpose: To express the intention of the legislature to take actions designed to recruit, train, and retain qualified teachers.

Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.

LLP Position: Watch.

SB 1162 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour, effective July 1, 2007, and to \$7.75 per hour, effective July 1, 2008. Minimum wage would be adjusted automatically at intervals to be determined.

Status: In the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations Committee for a vote on March 29.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 1164 (George Runner, R-Lancaster)
Purpose: To provide for a bond initiative to be approved by the voters and to provide funds for the upgrading or building of new schools.
Status: In the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1188 (Dean Florez, D-Bakersfield)
Purpose: To prohibit employers from writing paychecks on a bank that would charge a fee for cashing the checks unless the employer reimburses the fee.
Status: In the Industrial Relations Committee for a vote on March 29. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1288 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To require Medi-Cal to cover residential and outpatient drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs for minors age 12 or older.
Status: In the Senate Health Committee for a vote on March 22. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1289 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To declare the intent of the legislature to enact legislation to address transitional housing and life skills training for foster children up to the age of 18.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1323 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To fund a pilot program in Los Angeles for providing mental health services to ex-felons with mental health and substance abuse problems.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1335 (Nell Soto, D-Ontario)
Purpose: To allow the revocation of the license of a foster care home if it does not obtain required medical and dental care for its foster children.
Status: In the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1383 Deborah Ortiz, D-Sacramento)
Purpose: To declare that a student who fails the high school exit exam, but who has completed all the coursework required to graduate from high school, qualifies for a high school equivalency certificate.
Status: In the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

LGBTI Issues

AB 606 (Lloyd Levine, D-Van Nuys)
Purpose: To require school districts to establish and publicize an anti-discrimination policy that prohibits discrimination and harassment based on gender identity and sexual orientation, among other things.
Status: In the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1056 (Judy Chu, D-Monterey Park)
Purpose: To require the State Board of Education to integrate instruction on tolerance into existing English language, and social science curriculum. Would establish these requirements as a pilot program in 10 schools.
Status: In the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1160 (Sally Lieber, D-San Jose)
Purpose: To establish court rules that reduce the chance of defendants using panic strategies as a way of evading conviction, or to reduce their sentence in trials for hate crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1207 (Leland Yee, D-San Francisco)
Purpose: To add to the pledge contained in the Code of Fair Campaign Practices that the candidate shall not use gay-bashing or transgender-bashing in their political campaigns.
Status: In the Senate Elections Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1897 (Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton)
Purpose: To allow the State Personnel Board to order the state to pay a complainant's reasonable attorney's fees when the state engaged in illegal employment discrimination.
Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee for a vote on March 14. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2051 (Rebecca Cohn, D-Campbell)
Purpose: To establish a \$23 fee for those registering as domestic partners. The money would go to fund domestic abuse training materials for use by programs that serve victims of same-sex and transgender domestic abuse.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2311 (Dennis Mountjoy, R-Monrovia)
Purpose: To prohibit the promotion of homosexuality in public education.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 2386 (Jenny Oropeza, D-Carson)
Purpose: To require the secretary of state to post on his website a list of candidates for public office who have signed a voluntary pledge to abide by a Code of Fair Campaign Practices during an election campaign.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2472 (Mark Wyland, R-Vista)
Purpose: To allow veterans and members of the military reserves, and their immediate family members (but not domestic partners) to qualify for in-state tuition rates for the California State University or Community College system.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support if amended to add domestic partners.

AB 2550 (Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo)
Purpose: To require that any qualified member of the California National Guard or a widow, widower, or spouse of a qualified member (but not a domestic partner) be awarded additional preference points, as specified, for any civil service employment.

Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Support if amended to add domestic partners.

AB 2800 (John Laird, D-Santa Cruz)
Purpose: To ban sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, among others, in housing and housing-related areas.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2920 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)
Purpose: To add LGBT seniors to a list of groups having the greatest need for services in our state.
Status: Introduced.
LLP Position: Still to be determined by the LLP Legislative Committee.

SB 1263 (Elaine Alquist, D-San Jose)
Purpose: To allow people to take state tax deductions on part of the premiums for long-term care insurance for themselves and their spouses or domestic partners, among others.
Status: In the Senate Revenue and Tax Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1437 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To prohibit sexual orientation or gender-based discrimination in any public school instruction or school-sponsored activities.
Status: In the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1441 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Los Angeles)
Purpose: To ban sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in programs operated or funded by the state.
Status: In the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

People of Color Issues

AB 432 (Jenny Oropeza, D-Carson)
Purpose: To authorize a new citizen to register and vote at a location designated by the county until 8 pm on Election Day.
Status: Failed in the Senate Elections Committee. Reconsideration granted. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 680 (Wilma Chan, D-Oakland)
Purpose: To require the state Board of Education to monitor school districts to make sure that, when 15% or more of the pupils enrolled in a public school speak a single primary language other than English, all notices, reports, statements, or records sent to the parent or guardian of the pupil by the school are written in that language and may

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Legislative Update

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be responded to either in that language or English. **Status:** Assembly concurrence pending amendments made in the Senate. In the Assembly inactive file. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 775 (Leland Yee, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To prohibit any state or local governmental agency, or any entity that receives state funding, from using any child, or permitting any child to be used, as an interpreter in any hospital, clinic, or physician office in the context of diagnosis or treatment, except as specified.

Status: In the Senate Judiciary Committee. Hearing cancelled at the request of the author.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 1076 (Jerome Horton, D-Inglewood)

Purpose: To require that public schools teach children about World War II and the role of Filipinos in that war.

Status: In the Senate Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1894 (Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo)

Purpose: To have employees of the California Department of Corrections (state prisons) get involved in the investigation of undocumented immigrants.

Status: In the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Hearing cancelled at the request of the author.

LLP Position: Oppose.

AB 1988 (Joe Coto, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To require the State Department of Education and other agencies to develop criteria to identify effective California educators and programs to train other educators in providing effective English learner instruction, and to develop databases of these educators and programs.

Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2060 (Hector De La Torre, D-South Gate)

Purpose: To require the Department of Community Services and Development to contract with, and allocate funds to, organizations to provide free naturalization services to would-be citizens.

Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2086 (Mervyn Dymally, D-Compton)

Purpose: To require the Chancellor of California's Community Colleges to encourage community college districts in northern California to expand services to indigenous peoples through collaborative programs with private, open-access, nonprofit tribal colleges in the region. Would encourage community college districts to negotiate and implement articulation agreements with tribal colleges to assist indigenous peoples to gain access to nursing and teacher preparation programs.

Status: In the Assembly Higher Education Committee. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position: Support.

AB 2302 (Assembly Judiciary Committee)

Purpose: To require the courts to provide interpreters in a wide variety of civil cases when a party to the proceeding is limited English proficient unless the party provides his or her own interpreter.

Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2420 (Ted Lieu, D-El Segundo)

Purpose: To require state agencies, when collecting demographic data, to specifically collect data for Bangladeshi, Fijian, Hmong, Indonesian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Tongan, other Asians, and other Pacific Islanders, along with any other categories of people.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2508 (Ray Haynes, R-Temecula)

Purpose: To deny public benefits to undocumented immigrants in California.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

ACR 98 (Shirley Horton, R-Lemon Grove)

Purpose: To proclaim May 2006 as World Languages and Cultures Month, encourage all educational communities in California to celebrate languages and cultures with meaningful pupil activities and programs, and urge all residents to become interested in and give full support to quality language and cultural programs for all pupils in California schools.

Status: In the Assembly Education Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

ACR 100 (Rebecca Cohn, D-Campbell)

Purpose: To proclaim the time period of April 24 through April 30, 2006, as California Holocaust Memorial Week and urge Californians to observe these days of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust in an appropriate manner.

Status: In the Assembly Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.

LLP Position: Support.

ACR 101 (Alan Nakanishi, R-Lodi)

Purpose: To declare February 19, 2006, as a Day of Remembrance to increase public awareness of the events surrounding the internment of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

Status: In the Senate consent calendar. Awaiting final approval by the legislature.

LLP Position: Support.

ACR 115 (Joe Coto, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To recognize March 31, 2006, as the anniversary of the birth of Cesar Chavez and call upon all Californians to participate in appropriate

observances to remember Cesar Chavez as a symbol of hope and justice to all persons.

Status: In the Assembly Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.

LLP Position: Support.

AJR 37 (Mark Ridley Thomas, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To urge Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Status: In the Assembly Elections Committee for a vote on March 14. **LLP Position:** Support.

AJR 42 (Greg Aghazarian, R-Stockton)

Purpose: To designate April 24, 2006, as the California Day of Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923, and ask Congress to do likewise.

Status: In the Assembly Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.

LLP Position: Support.

AJR 43 (Mark Leno, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To urge Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and encourage Americans to celebrate the 41st anniversary of the Act.

Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 768 (Joseph Simitian, D-Palo Alto)

Purpose: To require public entities that broadcast personal information by radio to meet requirements that protect the privacy of that information. Provides punishment for those who improperly read, or try to read, that information.

Status: Passed the Senate. In the Assembly inactive file. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1068 (Martha Escutia, D-Norwalk)

Purpose: To state the intent of the legislature is to establish telecommunications consumer protections that, among other things, protect a consumer's right to personal privacy, to be protected from unauthorized use of the consumer's records and personal information, and to reject intrusive communications and technology.

Status: Passed the Senate. Failed in the Assembly Utilities Committee. Reconsideration granted. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1160 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To permit the issuance of limited-use driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants in conformance with federal law.

Status: In the Senate Transportation Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

SB 1267 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To establish the Office of Immigrant Affairs to ensure the integration and civic participation of new citizens in the state.

Status: In the Senate Committee on Government Modernization. No hearing date set yet.

LLP Position: Support.

SB 1405 (Nell Soto, D—Ontario)
Purpose: To establish the Task Force on Reimbursement for Language Services to develop and adopt a mechanism for seeking federal matching funds to pay for language assistance services, including oral interpretation services and translation of written materials, for the population that is limited English proficient and that is enrolled in Medi-Cal or the Healthy Families Program.
Status: In the Senate Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

SCR 94 (Martha Escutia, D—Norwalk)
Purpose: To proclaim April 30 through May 6, 2006, as Cinco de Mayo Week and urge all Californians to celebrate the event.
Status: On the Senate consent calendar, meaning little opposition to the bill is expected.
LLP Position: Support.

Women's Issues

AB 525 (Judy Chu, D—Monterey Park)
Purpose: To strengthen laws regarding the reporting of emotional child abuse likely to do serious emotional damage to a child.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1787 (Rebecca Cohn, D—Campbell)
Purpose: To allow courts to extend an existing restraining order that has expired if circumstances justify its continuance and the restrained person cannot be located for service of a new protective order.
Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 1796 (Rudy Bermudez, D—Norwalk)
Purpose: To require people seeking a license to practice medicine to disclose any information about any sexual misconduct or harassment in his or her past.
Status: In the Assembly Business and Professions Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 1911 (Bonnie Garcia, R—El Centro)
Purpose: To appropriate \$15 million for the support of Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) teams—coalitions of local law enforcement and other local government agencies that work together to fight sexual assault crimes—and require the Department of Justice to study their effectiveness.
Status: Referred to the Assembly Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

AB 2066 (Sally Lieber, D—San Jose)
Purpose: To state the intent of the legislature is to codify the recommendations of the Gender Responsive Strategies Commission regarding the

proper treatment of female prison inmates.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Watch.

AB 2084 (Betty Karnette, D—Long Beach)
Purpose: To make improvements in the laws relating to the operation of domestic abuse shelters.
Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2139 (Bonnie Garcia, R—El Centro)
Purpose: To require a police officer responding to a domestic violence complaint to inform the victim that he or she can ask the officer to request a restraining order against the perpetrator.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2141 (Dave Jones, D—Sacramento)
Purpose: To establish a parent-child communication program to help parents communicate with their children about sex so as to reduce the number of teen pregnancies.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on March 28. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2169 (Cindy Montanez, D—Mission Hills)
Purpose: To delete the sunset provision for a program designed to protect domestic violence victims from stalkers by keeping key information about the victims confidential. This protective program would continue indefinitely.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2251 (Noreen Evans, D—Santa Rosa)
Purpose: To prohibit anyone from posting on the Internet any information about the addresses, home phone numbers, or picture of any employee, volunteer (or their family members), or patient of a reproductive health services facility with the intent of causing bodily harm.
Status: In the Assembly Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2317 (Paul Koretz, D—West Hollywood)
Purpose: To require the State Department of Health Services to design a perinatal mood and anxiety awareness program to help mothers deal with problems like postpartum mood and anxiety disorders.
Status: In the Assembly Health Committee for a vote on March 28. **LLP Position:** Support.

AB 2512 (Sharon Runner, R—Lancaster)
Purpose: To require a doctor, except in emergencies, to provide a woman with information and counseling on fetal pain before performing an abortion.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Oppose.

AB 2555 (Jenny Oropeza, D—Carson)
Purpose: To increase the penalties for employers who pay employees of one sex less than those of the other sex for the same work.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

ACA 24 (Rebecca Cohn, D—Campbell)
Purpose: To increase the income tax on income above \$100,000 per year and require that the extra taxes taken in this way be used to support domestic violence shelters.
Status: Introduced. **LLP Position:** Support.

ACR 99 (Rebecca Cohn, D—Campbell)
Purpose: To declare the month of October 2006 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
Status: In the Assembly Rules Committee awaiting referral to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

ACR 106 (Leland Yee, D—San Francisco)
Purpose: To encourage participation in the White Ribbon Campaign against violence against women.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1240 (Dennis Hollingsworth, R—Temecula)
Purpose: To appropriate \$15 million for the support of Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) teams, coalitions of local law enforcement and other local government agencies that work together to fight sexual assault crimes.
Status: In the Senate Public Safety Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1245 (Liz Figueroa, D—Fremont)
Purpose: To require that insurance companies of health care providers pay for the HPV test in addition to the pap test and the option of an FDA-approved cervical cancer screening test.
Status: In the Senate Banking Finance and Insurance Committee. No hearing date set yet.
LLP Position: Support.

SB 1260 (Deborah Ortiz, D—Sacramento)
Purpose: To require that a doctor, before harvesting eggs from a woman for research purposes, obtain her written consent and provide her with information on health and consumer issues related to the process.
Status: In the Senate Health Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.

SCR 76 (Elaine Alquist, D—San Jose)
Purpose: To declare October 2006 as Breast Cancer Prevention and Awareness Month.
Status: In the Senate Rules Committee awaiting assignment to a committee.
LLP Position: Support.

SJR 19 (Elaine Alquist, D—San Jose)
Purpose: To urge Congress and the President to uphold the Roe v. Wade decision of the US Supreme Court.
Status: In the Senate Judiciary Committee. No hearing date set yet. **LLP Position:** Support.



Women's Issue

Continued from page 3

"WHEREAS, The 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* established constitutionally based limits on the power of states to restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy; and

"WHEREAS, *Roe v. Wade* is one of the most significant Supreme Court decisions in the 20th century promoting women's rights; and "WHEREAS, Reproductive rights are central to the ability of women to exercise their full rights under federal and state laws; and "WHEREAS, It is the right of every American woman to determine when, if, and with whom to have children, and how many children to have; and

"WHEREAS, Women's ability to control their reproductive lives has facilitated their equal participation in the economic and social life of the nation;

"WHEREAS, The state should not interfere with a woman's decision to either bear a child or terminate a pregnancy through a safe and legal abortion; and

"WHEREAS, Women should not be forced into illegal and dangerous abortions, as they often were prior to the *Roe v. Wade* decision; and "WHEREAS, During the first half of the 20th century, illegal abortions accounted for about 50 percent of all maternal deaths; and

"WHEREAS, *Roe v. Wade* has significantly reduced the mortality rate for women terminating their pregnancies; and

"WHEREAS, *Roe v. Wade* continues to protect the health and freedom of women throughout the United States; now, therefore, be it

"Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California memorializes the Congress and the President of the United States to protect and uphold the intent and substance of the 1973 United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*; and be it further

"Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States and to all Members of the Congress of the United States."

LGBTI Issue

Continued from page 3

According to Kevin Jennings, Executive Director of the GLSTN, "When LGBT students have supportive teachers, Gay-Straight Alliances, and less hostile school climates, their grades rise dramatically and they are much more likely to plan to go on to college."

If this education and support about LGBTI issues is beneficial to all students, why would a state legislator who is relied upon to act in students' best interests legislate to deny LGBTI students relief from persecution at school?

When Mountjoy tried to pass a similar bill in 2002, he explained that the material used in the Los Angeles Unified School District's homosexuality curriculum was "pornographic and obscene." Quoted in an article by Declaration Foundation on January 31, 2002, Mountjoy said, "The material is being put forward under the guise of tolerance and diversity, but it's inappropriate. It's lewd and lascivious." His anti-homosexual curriculum bill was easily squashed in the Assembly in 2002.

Please write the Assembly Education Committee this month to ask them to bury the 2006 version of a homophobic bill by Mountjoy as they did in 2002.

Our public schools do not belong only to heterosexual students. Every single student deserves to be treated with respect and taught to treat every single student with respect.

An Apology

By Boyce Hinman, Chief Lobbyist

Recently many of you have contacted me to report that checks you sent to us in December and January have not been cashed. Some of you said you had sent us a change of address form and yet your monthly mailings were still going to your old address.

I do apologize for these problems. They resulted from a mistake by the post office. In December our San Diego office moved. Although the woman who works that office submitted a change of address form at the post office, they apparently got the change wrong. They continued to send correctly addressed mail to our old address.

A couple of weeks ago, the post office delivered a crate of old mail to her. It was filled with dozens of letters that they, at first, delivered to the wrong place. There were dozens of checks in the envelopes. There was at least one change of address form too.

I am hopeful that any outstanding checks you sent us have now been deposited. They should appear on your next bank statement. I believe that any changes of address will become effective with this mailing. If these things do not occur, please let us know about it.

Again, I do apologize for any inconvenience this has caused you.



Bible or Constitution?

As was reported in the *Baltimore Sun*, on March 1 a Senate committee debated whether Maryland should ban same-sex marriage in its constitution. At the end of the testimony of Jamie Raskin, a professor of law at American University and a candidate for Maryland state senator, Republican Senator Nancy Jacobs commented on the influence of the Bible on modern law.

"As I read Biblical principles, marriage was intended, ordained and started by God—that is my belief," she said. "For me, this is an issue solely based on religious principles."

Raskin retorted that the Constitution should instead be lawmakers' guiding principle: "People place their hand on the Bible and swear to uphold the Constitution; they don't put their hand on the Constitution and swear to uphold the Bible," he said.



Economics Issue

Continued from page 4

Imagine that the person who just received lethal injection is innocent and that, after his death, he is cleared by DNA evidence. Nationally, many death row inmates have been found innocent of the crime for which they were convicted. Upon retrial, appeals courts have reversed many of the defendant's death sentences because they found the sentencing trial to have grave errors due to incompetent public defenders. In California, one-third of death row inmates have no lawyer. AB 2266 would ensure that there is a just process to make certain that wrongly convicted prisoners do not receive the state's cruel punishment.

In addition, the death penalty is an inhumane, irrevocable sentence that does not deter violent crime. Between 1967 and 1991, when there were no executions in California, murder rates rose 17 percent. Conversely, in Texas, a state that heavily relies on the death penalty, the murder rate rose 41 percent. There is no evidence proving that capital punishment deters crime.

If there is no evidence that the death penalty deters violent crime, then why does the state of California spend more than \$250 million per execution? (That's right, according to a *Los Angeles Times* study in 2005, it costs Californians \$250 million to go from first trial to execution.) California would save \$90 million per year if it were to abolish the death sentence. There are currently more than 640 inmates on death row in California, more than in any other state. Of those 640, more than 20 have appeals pending in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

According to WorldPolicy.org, the cost of a capital trial in California costs three times as much as other criminal trials because of that lengthy and expensive appeals process. AB 2266 would keep the state's costs down because it would establish a process to reduce wrongful convictions significantly by creating the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice.

If the death penalty violates the Eighth Amendment's safeguard against cruel and unusual punishment, does not deter violent crime, and does not save the state money, then why does the state of California still mete out capital punishments?

Please urge the Assembly Appropriations Committee to approve this bill and give it a chance on the Assembly floor.

Heart-to-Heart Talk

Continued from page 1

Often there is just no money left to provide supper for the family. At best children get one or two tamales, with no filling, for supper. At worst they are given water, with a little sugar in it, to quell their hunger before going to bed.

It is common for these impoverished people to rush to the town dump whenever a new load of trash is delivered. Children and parents paw through the rubbish looking for any trinket they can clean off and sell. Often the dump pile is oozing blood and placentas from hospital waste. If children happen to find a scrap of bread among all this filth, they are likely to eat it on the spot to stave off their hunger.

Under these circumstances, parents have a moral obligation to go someplace where they can earn the money they need to provide a decent life for their children. For Central Americans, that place is the United States. If they can get the proper documents to come here legally, wonderful. If I were a parent in that situation, and could not get the proper documentation, I would still feel obligated to come here rather than let my children starve. As it is, the United States has strict immigration quotas, so for many it is simply impossible to get the proper immigration documentation.

Many of these immigrants go through the gates of hell to get here. It is common for Central Americans to ride on the tops of box cars as they travel through Mexico towards the United States. The author of Enrique's Journey did this herself, although she is a legal resident in the US, to see for herself what this is like. She reports that the train tops are ruled by gangs who rape, rob, and pillage the migrants. Often they throw migrants off the moving trains. Many hundreds of migrants are killed or maimed in this fashion. Many lose arms or legs or are decapitated under the wheels of the train. Many migrants tie themselves to parts of the train so they won't fall off the train if they fall asleep. That too could result in the loss of an arm or leg. Many migrants leave their children behind in the care of other family members to spare their children from the dangers of such a trip.

The lucky ones eventually arrive in the United States relatively unharmed. In most cases, they work two and even three jobs in order to earn enough money to support themselves and also to send money home to support their children. This often makes it possible for their children to stay in school,

It's Our Anniversary

Continued from page 1

Originally the Project worked only on HIV/AIDS issues, lesbian and gay issues, and issues of concern to women. In 1993 we added issues of concern to people of color. This year we added economic justice issues. Over time we expanded lesbian and gay area to include bisexual and transgender issues. We hope also to work on intersex issues. None have been brought to our attention yet.

There are three reasons we work on all those issues.

First of all, many of our members are women or members of various ethnic and national groups. We need to represent their interests.

Second, we believe passionately in justice for all people. If we accept the concept that injustice to any particular group is acceptable, then we are really saying it is OK for someone to determine which unlucky class should be the brunt of that injustice. This means that if the wrong people get into power, they could deny justice to the LGBTI community. The only way to avoid that is to push hard the concept that injustice to any group is unacceptable.

Finally, we embrace a wide range of issues because there are only six state legislators who come from the LGBTI community. They do not have enough votes to pass legislation needed by that community. We hope that working in support of issues that are important to legislators from other communities will encourage them to support LGBTI issues. I have seen lots of evidence that this does happen.

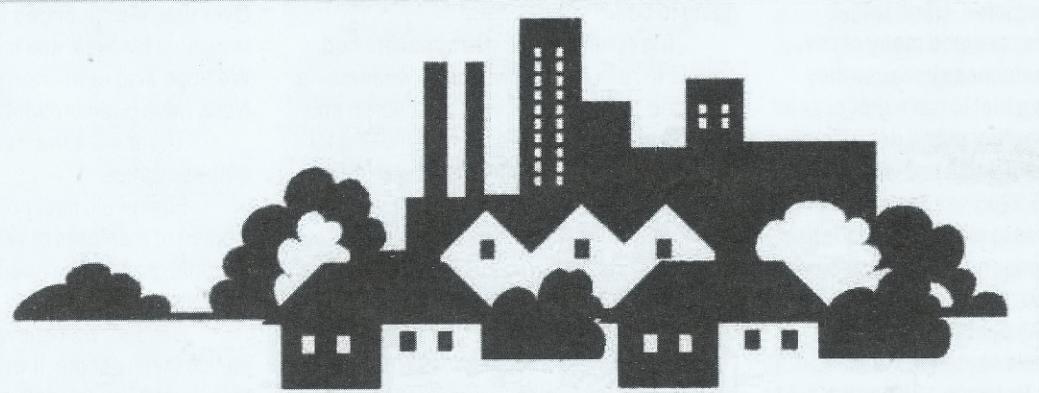
We thank you for all the support you and other community members have given us over the years. We pledge to continue to work on your behalf for the foreseeable future.



have enough to eat, and maybe even have a decent home to live in.

In my view, these migrants are doing what every responsible parent would do—and they do so at great risk to themselves. I am not now advocating any particular policy towards undocumented immigrants. However, I think that any policy we do adopt should recognize the moral obligations they live with and should help, rather than hinder, them from fulfilling their obligations.





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